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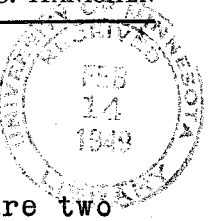

THE VALUE OF TITO

by Constantin Fotitch

Norway, in northern Europe, and Yugoslavia, in the south, are two small nations which Soviet Russia must dominate in order to nullify the American plan for a North Atlantic military alliance.

If Norway can be added to the Western bloc, Great Britain will be more secure and Communist penetration will be held back from the North Sea. If Yugoslavia can be added to the Western bloc, Italy and Greece will be more secure, and Communist penetration will be held back from the Mediterranean area.

Norway and Yugoslavia are thus the key points in the present diplomatic struggle. The contest for control of Norway is currently making the headlines. But the issue of whether Yugoslavia can be detached from Communist domination is of equal importance to the future of Western civilization. It is now six months since Tito split with the Cominform. The Yugoslav dictator has been at outs with the Kremlin long enough to estimate the significance of his defection.

In the Yugoslav Assembly -- controlled entirely by his followers -- Tito stated on December 27, 1948, that he may have to sell raw material "even to capitalistic countries, in order to buy machinery we need for the modernization of our mines and heavy industry".

Tito thus admitted that the whole economy of Communist Yugoslavia has been completely dislocated by the economic boycott which Soviet Russia has applied to punish him. In consequence, execution of Tito's ambitious Five Year Plan, on which he staked the fate of the regime, has been irretrievably compromised. In a recent speech at Zagreb, Tito admitted that he must revise the Five Year Plan by eliminating "secondary projects" and concentrating all efforts on heavy industry and mining.

Tito's statements have raised the question of whether he could be gradually led from economic collaboration toward political association with the Western democracies. Any answer to that question must first take into account the charges of those skeptics who still believe that the entire conflict between Tito and his former associates is simulated.

Of course the Communists are past masters in the art of intrigue, but the conflict between Tito and Stalin has gone beyond that stage and seems to be definitely unbridgeable. It does not stop at name-calling and recrimination. There have been at least two attempts to liquidate Tito, one of them involving the former Chief of Staff of the Army, who

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shortly thereafter himself met a sudden death. Stalin expressed willingness to meet with President Truman in Poland or Czechoslovakia, but not in Yugoslavia. The increasingly hostile attitude of Tito's Communist neighbors, especially Bulgaria and Albania, is further evidence that this conflict is genuine.

II

Tito's split with the Soviet bloc has been appraised as of considerable value to the Western Powers in the cold war with the Soviets. He has been hailed as a national leader who has rallied the overwhelming majority of the Yugoslav people in defense of their independence.

These optimistic appraisals are considerably exaggerated. They credit Yugoslavia with military and economic importance far beyond reality. A good many grains of salt should have accompanied the prediction that the Soviet would suffer greater damage from the conflict than Yugoslavia itself. The same applies to the assertion that Tito is able to "divert his great resources in metals to the capitalistic countries".

The pre-war production reports of Yugoslavia (the post-war figures are not available in absolute figures but only in percentage) show how misleading such statements are. In 1938, Yugoslavia produced 662,015 tons of copper ore, 551,000 tons of iron ore, 749,183 tons of lead and zinc ore, 47,352 tons of chromium, 84,828 tons of bauxite.

Even if one accepts the assertion that production of these minerals has now exceeded pre-war level, it is certain that the magnitude of Yugoslav production is far from being of such importance as to affect world economy in any important degree. Of course, for a country the size of Yugoslavia, it represents a great economic asset; but not sufficient to "stir the greatest interest in the West and raise a storm among the governments in the East", to quote one recent observation.

In addition to its mineral resources, Yugoslavia can be expected to show a surplus of food, food products and timber. But the export of those products has already been pushed to the limit by Tito's trade agreements with Switzerland, Sweden and Great Britain. The export of food products was made possible at the expense of the domestic population, especially in the cities. The ration of basic food borders on undernourishment, that of meat being only 200 grams (6 ounces) a week, and bread 300 grams a day. Even such meager rations are seldom honored.

In the presence of growing popular discontent, Tito, in his above-mentioned speech in Parliament, announced that further exports of food will be discontinued in 1949. He obviously meant that no new trade agreements involving food from Yugoslavia will be concluded.

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III

In spite of Yugoslavia's limited economic potential it is suggested that Tito's new orientation will play an important part in trade and commerce with the West. And with the change of economic orientation it is predicted that a political reorientation will follow. Until now nothing has occurred to justify these optimistic predictions.

Tito, hard pressed by the commercial boycott imposed by the Soviet and its satellites, is simply fighting to stave off an economic collapse which would engulf his whole regime. He is trying to obtain from the West the machinery and industrial products on which depend even the partial execution of his ambitious but now unattainable Five Year Plan.

Moreover, some of these Western countries (such as Great Britain and Switzerland) had important pre-war investments in Yugoslavia. Those investments have been expropriated by Tito in the true Communist tradition. But in the discussion of the trade agreements, these bourgeois governments unsympathetically presented Tito with heavy bills for indemnity to their citizens. Great Britain alone requested seven million pounds sterling for Trepca Mines, Ltd., owned by a British company. Finally the British Government compromised for four and a half million pounds sterling ($18 million) to be paid in annual installments.

Those payments can only be covered by exports from Yugoslavia, thus diminishing to a considerable extent the return in British goods. To make up this trade deficit the Tito regime seeks to increase domestic production by imposing compulsory overtime and speed-up methods. These have transformed the country into a vast camp of slave labor, mercilessly terrorized by the secret police.

IV

If the economic collaboration of Yugoslavia with the Western world is of secondary importance, there should be even less illusion about the potential value of political collaboration with Tito.

Since his spectacular break with the Cominform, the Yugoslav dictator has always emphasized that he remains faithful to Communism and loyal to the Soviet Union. At the Danube Conference, held last July and August in Belgrade, Tito's delegation was a most unfriendly host to the American and Western European delegations. During the last Assembly of the United Nations the Yugoslav delegation unreservedly supported the Soviets. Recent statements of Yugoslav Communist leaders emphasize that Yugoslavia will always remain loyal to Stalin. The new Chief of Staff

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of the Yugoslav Army, Peko Dapchevich, on December 14 solemnly proclaimed that in case of conflict: "the Yugoslav Army will be on the side of Soviet Russia and is already preparing itself to protect the freedom of the Eastern countries from the warmongering West."

Recently the United Nations Special Balkan Commission has again formally accused Yugoslavia of giving continuous support to the Greek guerrillas. And Tito's propaganda continues as before its constant attacks against "reactionary capitalism".

American and British correspondents in Belgrade have been working hard to detect some signs of a changing attitude on Tito's part. About all they have been able to report in this line is that at the reception given by Tito on the occasion of the anniversary of the Yugoslav Republic (November 29) the representatives of the Western countries were for the first time treated on a footing of equality with the Soviets and admitted to the same reception room with their Communist colleagues.

In the face of these facts, Americans should not be lulled into believing that Tito's regime has undergone a nationalist and democratic evolution. Tito is simply struggling to maintain himself in power and to save his regime. He well knows that with the Soviets there is no compromise. Hard pressed, the Yugoslav dictator therefore makes certain overtures to the West, but it would be an inexcusable blunder to believe that he will turn all-out against the Kremlin. It would be even more inexcusable if the democratic West should help to maintain in power a dictatorial regime originally imposed by the Soviets against the will of the overwhelming majority of the Yugoslav people.

Tito has a certain "nuisance value" in this cold war. His conflict with the Cominform undoubtedly weakens the monolithic Soviet system. But beyond that he is no asset to the Western world. And to try to make Tito an ally would damage the position of the Western countries among the people of Yugoslavia as well as among all other nations enslaved by Soviet dictatorship. The prestige of the West depends not only on its material strength, but just as much on its moral position as defender of those principles and ideals on which civilization depends.

Constantin Fotitch, author of The War We Lost, was the Yugoslav Ambassador to the United States from 1935 to 1946.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events

Vol. VI, No. 6

By Frank C. Hanighen

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LABOR AND FARMERS: The Senate fight over the Labor legislation is a study in guile. Truman is playing for Labor support in 1950 and 1952, by backing a bill written by organized Labor. He'd like to have emergency powers to stop national strikes -- to jump on John L. Lewis. But he counts on the Southern Democrats and the Republicans to give him these powers in the course of some sort of legislative compromise. He is obviously calculating that, in the end, he will get the power over Labor he wants as well as the kudos in the eyes of Labor for his grandstanding. Labor presumably will blame the GOP for obtaining "strong" powers for the Executive. Some politicos on the Hill ask: Why don't the GOP play it safe, let the Southern Democrats take the onus for demanding the Taft-Hartley bill provisions? Republicans reply that no Southern Democrat would assume this role; and besides the Minority had to defend its work in the 80th Congress. All in all, it looks as if Truman isn't doing so badly with his strategy on Labor.

On the other hand, in the perennially troublesome agricultural field, there are visible some troubles for the White House. The other day, an expert observer in matters agrarian told us the following story. Many of the farm lobbyists, it seems, went out of town for a week, confident that "they were taken care of" in the Wage-Hour legislation in the House. The first draft of the bill exempted farm and farm processing organizations from the new, higher minimum wage. But lo! while the farm lobbyists were away, the Labor Committee knocked out the exemptions and introduced some clauses the effect of which would be to raise the farmers' labor costs. One Farm Bureau man angrily asserted that the clause adversely affects 75 per cent of the farmers of the country. Others shouted "dirty pool" and "betrayal" at the "Fair Dealers" in the Labor Committee. They ask: Is Truman playing class politics, courting farm laborers at the expense of their employer-kulaks? And they complain: Doesn't the White House realize that the Democratic Party would have lost the election had it not been for the farm vote? Well, it does seem risky business to rob Peter to pay Paul, when Peter belongs to the same "grand coalition" as Paul.

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TREASURY: In the game of "musical chairs", which is the revamping of the Cabinet, it would be surprising if Forrestal remains in the Defense post later than May, and Snyder in the Treasury later than March. So, at least, say Administration officials whose jobs are not at stake. Snyder, it seems, sincerely wants to leave and to take a job with private banking. The President doesn't want to lose his old friend from Missouri, but will not continue to insist that he stay. Consequently, White House advisers are looking about for a successor to Snyder. It may be said positively that one man they are discussing is William McChesney Martin, who until recently headed the Export-Import Bank. The fact that two weeks ago Martin resigned from Export-Import and took a post as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury is being interpreted as preparation for the top job. It may also be significant that the "liberals" have so far not mentioned a candidate for Snyder's position, nor have they ever discovered anything "reactionary" about Martin.

Martin has won a place of esteem and respect, during his career in Export-Import. He stuck firmly to the letter of the Congressional statute, and he is consequently popular on Capitol Hill. He is said to possess a very realistic understanding of the foreign aid situation. In this new Treasury post, he is detailed to watch this situation, and while appreciative of recovery gains, he is not blind to the failure of European nations to get back to real intra-European trade. His career in investment banking and as President of the Stock Exchange has made him persona grata in the financial community. Martin is a man worth watching.

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MINDSZENTY: Reading accounts of the Mindszenty trial, we felt the same puzzlement -- the same feeling of frustration because we could not really believe such things could be -- that came over us some years ago during our first perusal of Koestler's Darkness at Noon. What, for instance, was the meaning of that strange statement of the Cardinal, text of which appeared in the New York Times (February 4)? We phoned a certain learned Catholic clergyman to find out. "I agree with you", he said, "that it seems scarcely intelligible, which to my mind makes it all the more significant. Now, the Cardinal who visited here several years ago, is a highly intelligent man, with a precise and logical mind. Obviously the statement isn't characteristic of him, obviously he must have been subjected to some kind of torture or third degree. Also, he must have known that his friends would have noted the difference between this utterance and those of normal times when he was free. It occurred to me that I would have made the very same kind of statement, if I had gone through such an experience, that I would have tried to convey to friends the plight I was in, feeling sure that they would read between the lines and understand."

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GIESEKING: During World War II, we could congratulate ourselves that, in the midst of various outrages to civil liberty, at least we did not attempt to lynch Brahms, Beethoven and Bach. During World War I and its aftermath, we were guilty of such idiocies as ousting Dr. Karl Muck of the Boston Symphony and preventing Fritz Kreisler from playing Viennese airs for concert audiences. But our recent fair record in the music field has been spoiled by an incident in the past few weeks. Walter Gieseking, German pianist, had to cancel a concert at Carnegie which was picketed by anti-German zealots; and then, after some very strange business in the Department of Justice, "decided" to take a plane immediately back to Germany. Those attacking the artist claim he had been a Nazi during the past war, and had played before Nazi bigwigs.

The fact is that Gieseking had been cleared by a de-Nazification court, and by U. S. Counter-Intelligence (hardly a body to give anyone the benefit of the doubt). One consolation has been a volume of protests in the press. One person wrote to the Washington Daily News: "The case of German pianist Walter Gieseking prompts me, a confirmed Southerner, to express my admiration for the neatness and dispatch with which you Yankees execute a pseudo-legal lynching without violating anybody's civil rights -- since the groups which usually scream the loudest about civil rights seem to be in the vanguard of the current tar-and-feathering."

A musical friend has raised a better point, in our opinion. Why did not these musical bigots boycott concerts by Enesco, the Romanian sympathy conductor, who toured this country? Enesco may not be a Communist, but he possesses estates in Romania, has never to our knowledge assailed the Communist-puppet government of his country, was allowed free access in and out of his country, and has played before that terrifying Communist dictator, Anna Pauker. In view of such a record of benevolence by a totalitarian regime, why didn't the persecutors of the German pianist protest the Romanian conductor's musical appearances in this country? Our friend, after these questions, remarked that, although strongly anti-Communist, he had no personal objection to Enesco conducting in America; and, though strongly anti-Nazi, neither had he any objections to Gieseking's appearance in Carnegie Hall.

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KRAVCHENKO: Mr. Tom Clark, Attorney General, whose own conduct of "justice" (while infinitely superior to that of the Soviets) appears a bit quaint at times to Americans, is now being urged to bar the re-entry into the United States of Victor Krav-

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chenko, author of I Chose Freedom. Kravchenko left some months ago for Paris, to fight a libel suit against a French fellow traveller publication which had attacked him. Before he left for France, Kravchenko asked the Attorney General for permission to return to these shores after the end of the case. Legally, as a non-citizen and former Communist, he could be barred by the Immigration authorities. Mr. Clark gave his assurance that Kravchenko would be re-admitted, under certain powers residing in the Attorney General.

Now, friends of the Soviet Union in this country have started a campaign to block re-entry. Some posing as conservatives write letters to Government officials and to Mr. Clark expressing indignation that this "former Communist" should want to re-enter the country and demanding that the Immigration officers bar him. If Mr. Clark himself has the time to give the situation his attention, there is little doubt that Kravchenko will get back. But, the Attorney General is a busy man and there may be some artful little subordinates in his Department who could effectively stop Kravchenko's return by tossing into Justice machinery one of the handy monkey wrenches so useful to bureaucrats.

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SPIRIT OF PEACE: Some observers believe that Secretary Acheson was disturbingly ambiguous in his press statement (replying to Stalin's peace move) on the crucial problem of creating a German government. Such a government is the necessary preliminary to peace with Germany. Indeed, if Acheson is to unfold any real foreign policy he must really grapple with the problem of peace with both Germany and Japan. In this connection, a friend has drawn our attention to a piece by the late lamented Thomas F. Woodlock, in the Wall Street Journal, way back on December 9, 1942. Woodlock was probably the first (and for quite a while the only) writer who talked of the eventual necessity of dealing with these nations, if real peace was to be secured. His words of that date should command prayerful attention today:

"This is the first time in modern history that such a war has broken out. Two groups of people both armed with all the resources of modern science are engaged in a fight which seemingly must be to the death. Yet neither can exterminate the other. Japanese and Germans will continue to exist in the world side by side with the United Nations even though their fighting strength is annihilated, as no doubt it will be. No nation such as these can be kept perpetually in 'protective custody' by others. Were it possible, it would be a bankruptcy of civilization itself, but it is not even possible. At the end of the 'Victory' road there looms the greatest problem of all; how shall Germans and Japanese be readmitted to membership in what we now know must be a real world order? Sooner or later they must be if there is to be a World Order, for such an order cannot exist, any more than we could, half-slave, half-free.

"It is easy enough to see what must be achieved to reach the goal. There must be a common ideal, a common purpose and a common will to effect that purpose, one in which Japanese and Germans will join the United Nations. It must be a fully human ideal and purpose and the will must be present. Germans and Japanese are human beings like ourselves; like us, they have intellect, reason and will. They have proved themselves our match in all human techniques, peaceful and warlike. They have demonstrated skill, courage and tenacity equal to our own. We are not dealing with pure animal instincts but with free human wills. The conflict for all its complicated mechanical aspects is first, last and always, a conflict of the spirit, and it is in the order of the spirit alone that it can and must be ended. Our 'Victory' in the battlefield will be no victory unless we are victorious also in the spiritual field."

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Book Events

The Grand Design, by John Dos Passos. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company. $3.50.
Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

The press notices evoked by Mr. John Dos Passos' new novel give some plausibility to the accusations, frequently heard nowadays, that the trade of book-reviewing has fallen into the control of political coteries; so that what purport to be works of imagination are praised or disparaged, publicized or slighted, according to the political affinities of the author. Thus, with not many exceptions, the reviewers of The Grand Design have dealt with it in terms of haughty disdain or of extravagant flattery. It is true, of course, that The Grand Design has to do with the life and manners of official Washington in the first eight years of the Roosevelt revolution, and that what Mr. Dos Passos wishes to show is how the New Deal was betrayed and abandoned by its own leaders in their greed for power. It is also true that Mr. Dos Passos has endowed many of his characters with the physical likenesses, the mannerisms, the foibles, the vocabularies, and indeed almost everything but the names, of various palladins of the Roosevelt administration. But all this is hardly a reason for examining and judging the book as though it were a work of history. The art of fiction has its own rules of authenticity, under which it suffices that the narrative action follow logically from the combination of character and circumstance as developed by the author; to dispute this would be much the same as to deny artistic validity to the historical tragedies of Shakespeare on the ground that Brutus was not a disinterested patriot but a rapacious usurer, or that Macbeth was not a bloody tyrant but an able and generous ruler. It was Mr. Dos Passos' revolutionary temper and his hatred of bourgeois Society that encouraged critics of Leftist persuasion to place so lofty an estimate on the artistic quality of his work. This estimate began to decline when he began to attack the Machiavellianism of the Communist Party. Thus there is now a disposition among one set of critics to classify him as a tired and disgruntled radical who has sold out to reaction and to compare The Grand Design regretfully to such works as Manhattan Transfer and the U. S. A. trilogy.

But I cannot find in The Great Design any great modification of Mr. Dos Passos' political ideas, which have always inclined him in the direction of a nebulous and sentimental anarchism, or much evidence of an enfeeblement of his talent. It seems to me that this book reflects precisely the same powers and weaknesses that have been evident in his work for nearly thirty years; the real change, I suspect, is in those reviewers who read U. S. A. when they were young and enthusiastic and have read The Grand Design when middle aged, fastidious and bored. Actually, Mr. Dos Passos' work as a whole constitutes a single continuous topical commentary, after the fashion of M. Jules Romains. Many of the characters in Adventures of a Young Man and Number One reappear in the present novel. Mr. Dos Passos' special gifts include an acute and accurate ear for various forms of colloquial speech, and an ability to recapture the atmosphere of an epoch, a locality or a social milieu; he has perhaps never employed this gift to better advantage than in revivifying the Washington of the 1930's with its curious flavor of idealism, eroticism, alcohol and neurasthenia. Mr. Dos Passos literary vices include a fondness for dithyrambic prose and for caricature rather than characterization. The truth is that Mr. Dos Passos, though he has much genuine compassion for the weak and the unlucky, much indignation at injustice, and much savage scorn for hypocrisy, has, like so many radicals, no real liking for human beings as such, nor much trust in either their goodness or their intelligence. And here, I think, we come to his great defect as a novelist -- the profound contradiction between his revolutionary aspiration and his pessimistic philosophy. For it is unthinkable that such a Society as Mr. Dos Passos desires could be created by the kind of men and women who populate his books.

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